Anniversary of a shipwreck

On Wednesday July 15th, 1896, the French boat *Apolline Emilie* approached Easter Island in a violent storm that was accompanied by fierce winds from the northeast. The ship was driven against the coast and wrecked. This year was the 100th anniversary of that tragedy, the first shipwreck to occur on the coast of Rapa Nui.

At that time, Merlot and Company had a concession on the island and had ordered cargo from France which was being brought by the *Apolline Emilie*. Fourteen crew members survived, including three Germans, ten Chileans and an Italian, Rafael Cardinali. Ten others were lost in the shipwreck including the German captain and the pilot. Cardinali, who was born in Tuscany in 1873, elected to remain on the island. The rest of the shipwrecked crew were transported to Valparaíso on the Chilean boat *Marjia Luisa*. Cardinali ended up working for the Merlot company and became integrated into the island community.

Camillo Branchi, the head of *L'Italia*, a newspaper from Valparaíso, visited Rapa Nui in 1933 and contacted Cardinali who showed him his house from which flew an Italian flag. Cardinali had a daughter, Maria Angela Carmen, who was born in 1918. The Rapanui knew her as Carmela Pakomio. She married Alberto Paoa and had 3 sons and 4 daughters. After becoming a widow, she remarried and had four other children.

Alberto, the eldest, was born in 1933. He was a giant of 2 meters and resembled his grandfather with light skin, blond hair and green eyes. At age 23, he—together with seven other islanders—organized a tragic adventure: they attempted to reach Tahiti in a small boat. They were never heard from again.

A great friend of padre Englert, Cardinali lived his last years in poor health. He was buried in the island cemetery, wrapped in the Italian flag as was his wish. The poet Guido Bonetta, of *La Calera*, exalted him in a poem. The name of the illustrious Tuscan was extinguished as he had no surviving sons but his descendants recognized him after his death. Samuel Cardinali, a former mayor of the island, as well as other members of the family, bear his name with pride.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, August 1996

The Port at La Pérouse Bay

La Pérouse Bay as the site for a new port is being evaluated by the Minister of Public Works (MOP). Among a series of options under consideration is La Pérouse, on the northeast coast, 16 km from Hanga Roa. It is one of the major choices. Following the inauguration of the first paved route to Anakena beach, one of the obstacles to building a port at La Pérouse has been solved. The amount of US$4 million would permit construction of a port 70 meters long and 7 meters wide that would join with a pier 70 meters long and 12.9 meters wide for the unloading of cargo.

A port at La Pérouse could receive boats of 1,000 tons at all times of the year. In actuality, the island needs an artificial port from which to receive cargo. The procedure today is to unload at Hanga Piko which only accommodates small cargo carriers. According to Minister Lagos, during the year activities are suspended for 150 days owing to the strength of the predominate northwest winds. In practical terms, this situation lasts from May to October, which means that cargo can be unloaded only in March and December. An additional element is that if this port is built, cargo from the island such as bananas and pineapple can be exported cheaply to the continent.

Equally, the preliminary estimates made by the Direction de Obras Portuarias states that cruise ships such as the *Europa* and *Maxim Gorky* could can unload passengers more safely than they now can at Hanga Piko.

The theme of the port for the island has been planned by diverse authorities as an initiative destined to be resolve problems and aid in the unloading of cargo, passengers and provide a safe harbor for fishing boats, factory ships and Navy ships.

Strong arguments against the port at La Pérouse are the impacts on the environment and the certain destruction of archaeological sites. Despite these potential impacts, La Pérouse continues to be the "front runner" for a port.

Twelve sites around the island have been studied for many years; these are, on the northwest coast, Punta Ana, Hanga Roa, Papa Haoa, Hanga Piko, and Mataveri Otai; on the south coast, Vinapu, Vaihu and Hotu Iti, and in the northeast coast, Anakena, Ovahe, La Pérouse and Taha Roa.

El Mercurio de Valparaiso, 8 September 1996

Correction: In Vol. 10(3):63 we described the completion of four manuals for learning the Rapanui language. Unfortunately we neglected to mention the names of the Rapanui teachers involved in this project: they are Francisco Edmunds Paoa, Virginia Haoa Cardinali, Catalina Hey Paoa, and Hilaria Tuki Pakarati, assisted by field linguists Nancy and Bob Weber of the Universidad Católica de Valparaíso and the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

BOOK REVIEWS

📖 *People of the Great Ocean. Aspects of Human Biology of the Early Pacific.* Philip Houghton. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1996. Hard cover, 247 pages, plus references and index. Maps, tables, graphs; $64. ISBN 0-521-47166-4.

Review by Georgia Lee

The focus of *People of the Great Ocean* is human biology of the first Pacific people and their adaptation to their environment. Houghton, a professor of anatomy and structural biology at the University of Otago, New Zealand, takes us through the nature of the Pacific environment and the sequence of settlement in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 considers the physique of Pacific peoples in terms of height and weight using the historical record, skeletal record, and measurements on the living. The variation in physique against a model of adaptation to a changing environment is examined in Chapter 3. Included here is a computer simulation of human survival at sea using data from Pacific meteorological records. In Chapter 4, the author considers the skeletal record

from the past, while the following Chapter discusses various models and views on human settlement including linguistics, racial typologies, and DNA studies. Chapter 6 examines past health and disease in the Pacific and closes with Chapter 7 which considers possible relationships of some health problem in contemporary Pacific peoples in relation to the evolutionary influences of the past.

The computer model developed to study the problem of survival in the face of wet-cold conditions encountered at sea by the Polynesians reveals that survival ratios are associated with latitude and are affected by wind-chill factors. As the author points out, the literature is awash with anecdotal evidence of chilling as the result of recurring wetness and wind conditions, even in the tropics. "For any group there is an approximately 5% decline in survival for each degree movement away from 10° of latitude; and there is an approximately 5% difference in survival between male and female in any group, the male being advantaged" (pg.85). The simulations suggest that some southern settlements (i.e., Easter Island and Rapa Iti) could only have occurred during unusually favorable weather and most probably during the summer months.

This book is surely not for the general reader with a vague interest in Oceanic studies. And its hefty price may put it out of reach for many students. The book jacket states that "This book will be of interest to physical anthropologists, human biologists and scholars of Pacific palaeohistory." Although I am none of the above, I found it absolutely fascinating.

📖 *The Riddle of the Pacific*. John Macmillan Brown. 1996 (reprint). Softcover, 312 pages, 128 illustrations. Originally published in 1924. ISBN 0-932813-29-1. Adventures Unlimited Press. 303 Main St., Kempton, IL 60619 $16.95.

Review by William Liller

In the summer of 1922, a distinguished Oxford-educated New Zealander, John Macmillan Brown (1846 - 1935) sailed non-stop from his home to Easter Island where he remained for five (or seven) months. Professor of Classics and English at Canterbury College, Christchurch, Brown had visited and written about many other islands in the Pacific. He knew well the language of the Maoris and had also studied other Polynesian languages.

The Preface to this book explains that the author has not made any attempt to give a full description of the monuments of the island, as he considered that Routledge's recently published (1919) book and Paymaster Thomson's Smithsonian article "have rendered that superfluous." Instead, he concentrates on the legends and the information given to him by his informant, Juan Tepano.

Brown begins with the supposition that there once was a large island to the east of Easter Island which he called Motu Matiro Hiva, the name used by the Rapanui for the basalt reef the Chileans call Sálas-y-Gómez. He suggests that it was this island, now submerged, that the buccaneer John Davis had seen, and he argues that the architects and builders of the *ahu*, and the carvers of the *moai* came from this island. His grounds are that there never would have been enough food available on Easter Island to feed "the great armies of workmen" that he claims were needed build these great monuments "in a moderately brief period".

Today we know that the *ahu* and *moai* were not made during "a few generations", and we now know that the Nasca plate, on which Easter Island sits, is deep, inactive and sprinkled with a few dozen sea mounts scattered along a line stretching eastward from the Island to northern Chile. (See the several maps in the article by Edwards et al. in the March 1996 RNJ.) Most of the tectonic activity in the area occurs around 300 km to the west of Easter Island.

But if we discount the now-outdated theories that Brown relies on, there is much valuable information and some surprisingly modern conclusions in this generously illustrated book. Brown points out that "the only Polynesian island that ever developed the conception of a medium of trade was Easter Island; and its currency was rats." And in the chapter "The American Coast" he states that "We can dismiss at once the idea that the American Coast peopled or even influenced Polynesia." His claim is that Polynesians brought to Chile and Peru the sweet potato (*kumara*), the banana, the coconut, the knotted string language (*quipu*), the *umu*, the *toki*, the intoxicating drink *chicha* (*kava*) and the poncho (*tiputa*). As for the fitted blocks and stone statues of Cuzco and Tiahuanco, Brown suggests that the idea came from the Marquesas and Pitcairn via Ra'ivavae and the Australs—and reached Easter Island as well. Brown, Routledge, Métraux and others all relied heavily on the same informant, Juan Tepano: he was intelligent, and he spoke fluent Spanish and a bit of pidgin English. It is interesting to speculate on how our current knowledge of Rapa Nui might have differed had it not been for him.

Finally, I feel it is my duty as reviewer to note that the press responsible for reprinting this book specializes in books featuring lost cities and vanished islands and continents. You'll be glad to know that one of their publications explains "how the statues were levitated around Easter Island in a clock-wise vortex movement."

📖 *Where in the World is Tonga?* Samantha J. Fisk, Kin Publications, 558 E. Double Street, Carson, California, 1996. Soft cover, map, 4 pages color photographs; 19 pages black and white pictures plus spot photos; 50 pages; $14.95. ISBN 0-9644426-3-9.

Where in the World is Tonga? is for a young audience, written by a 16 year old author. It was begun at age 9 as a school report on how she spent her summer. Samantha creates a feel for living in Tonga, being among the people and the culture. She describes how she went from being a *palangi* (white person) to an accepted member of an extended family. A good choice for something different in the way of books for kids. They may even learn something. All proceeds will be used by KIN Publications to promote a greater understanding of Pacific cultures.